Al-Muhannad ‘ala al-Mufannad Translation

Foreword by Mufti Mahmud Ashraf al-‘Uthmani[1]

After praising Allah (Great and Glorious is He) and blessing the Prophet, the Seal of the Prophets, our chief and our intercessor, Muhammad, and his family and all his companions:

The fortunate and respected brother, Master Muhammad ibn Adam al-Kawthari, al-Hindi thumma al-Biritani (Allah deliver him and preserve him from every evil) sent to me a transcript of *al-Muhannad ‘ala l-Mufannad* which is [currently] undergoing a new edition with beneficial and useful footnotes written by the aforementioned respected brother. I found it agreeable and accessible for readers of this book. This new edition along with its beneficial footnotes will become the best print of this book. Allah reward the respected brother the best of rewards from His presence and deliver him and grant him the ability to further serve the upright, monotheistic, magnanimous and clear religion in his bright future.

[After] this, of that which the reader ought to know with respect to this book are two important points:

First, this book is called *al-Muhannad ‘ala l-Mufannad* (The Sword against the Disproved), and although it has become famous as *‘Aqa’id Ahl al-Sunnah wa l-Jama‘ah* (Beliefs of the People of the Sunnah and the Group) or as *‘Aqa’id ‘Ulama Deoband* (Beliefs of the Scholars of Deoband) in some places in India, it is not in reality an independent book on creed. Nor did its author, the respected shaykh, the jurist, and hadith-scholar, Khalil Ahmad al-Saharanpuri (Allah Exalted is He have mercy on him), write it as an independent book on creed. It is but a compilation of questions and answers which were asked by the Arab scholars at that [time], so the shaykh responded with these answers, and these questions and answers were compiled into a book and were printed with the name *al-Muhannad ‘ala l-Mufannad*.

Since most of these questions were related to beliefs, and in the correct jargon, were related to the branches which pertain to beliefs and the science of Kalam, it became famous as *al-‘Aqa’id* (The Beliefs). The truth is that most of it pertains to the peripherals of Kalam not with the fundamentals and the decisive creeds [of Islam]. For this [reason], if a Muslim does not know some or most of it, there will not be any defect in his submission and faith, like the issue of taking an intermediary while supplicating (question 3) or preoccupation in Sufi practices (question 11) or the ruling on Wahhabis (question 12) or the ruling of celebrating the Prophetic birth (on him be blessing and peace)

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[1] The great scholar, the jurist, the jurisconsult, Shaykh Mahmud Ashraf al-‘Uthmani, one of the contemporary jurists of Pakistan and a teacher, professor of hadith and a member of the Ifta Committee (deputy jurisconsult) at Dar al-‘Ulum Karachi. He studied jurisprudence with his grandfather, the Grand Mufti, the great scholar, Shaykh Muhammad Shafi‘ who was described by Imam al-Kawthari as a master jurist (*faqih al-nafs*). He compiled some beneficial works. From them is a book in defence of Mu‘awiyah (Allah be pleased with him) and a book on the characteristic of forbearance. His grace is one of the most beloved elders and teachers to the students of knowledge in Pakistan since patience, forbearance and humility are manifest in him. Allah preserve him and benefit the Muslims with his breaths. (Mufti Muhammad ibn Adam al-Kawthari)

(question 21) or the possibility of the occurrence of lying or reneging on a promise (questions 23, 24 and 25) and other peripheral issues that are mentioned in this chapter. For this [reason], it is best not to call this book *'Aqa'id Ahl al-Sunnah wa l-Jama'ah* and it would be more suitable to called it *Maslak Ahl al-Sunnah wa l-Jama'ah* (The Methodology of the People of the Sunnah and the Group).

Secondly, although these issues mentioned in the book are undoubtedly sound, some of them are established by decisive texts and some of them are established by probabilistic texts and some of them are established by the statements of the great scholars using sound analogy while no decisive or probabilistic text mention them like the issue of the blessed piece of land [in which rests the body of Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him)] being superior to the Throne (*'arsh*) and the Seat (*kursi*).

Hence, these issues are not [all] at the same level. Rather, their levels differ according to their authenticity, and by the difference of their authenticity and levels, their rulings differ. So it is possible that an issue from the issues which are mentioned in this book is a decisive issue whose denier will be declared a disbeliever like the issue of the finality of prophethood (question 16); and it is possible that its denier will not be declared a disbeliever but will be accused of heresy like one who completely denies the life of the Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) (question 5); and it is possible that its denier will be accused of deviating from the straight path and from the four agreed-upon schools like the issue of taqlid (question 8, 9 and 10); and it is possible its denier will only be accused of ignorance like the issue of pledging allegiance at the hands of spiritual masters (*shuyukh*) (question 11) because people are enemies of what they don't know; and it is possible that the ruling of the issue mentioned in the book is ambiguous requiring something extra like the issue of taking an intermediary (question 3 and 4) since it is undoubtedly permissible according to the great majority of the scholars but becoming accustomed to taking an intermediary in every supplication as some do is not established in the three generations whose greatness has been attested to, so taking an intermediary is permissible but becoming accustomed to it in every supplication is not established.

Hence, these issues which are mentioned in this upstanding book are undoubtedly sound, established by the sources of the Shari'ah, but their levels differ, and by the differences in their levels, their rulings differ.

If the reader understands these two points which we just mentioned, the reader will be saved from excess and negligence in these sound issues.

Finally, gratitude to the respected and noble brother, Master Muhammad ibn Adam al-Kawthari (Allah increase him in understanding and knowledge of the religion) who strove, favourably, to produce this book in a new style and with modern printing (Allah reward him greatly on our behalf).

The servant, Mahmud Ashraf, Allah forgive him

28/1/1423 (11/4/2002)

Servant of the students at the University of Dar al-'Ulum Karachi

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Questions One and Two

In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Merciful

Dear noble ‘ulama and great scholars, [certain] people have attributed to your noble courtyard the beliefs of Wahhabis, and they have produced papers and treatises whose meanings we do not recognise due to a difference in language. So we hope you will inform us of the reality of the situation and the intents of the statements. We will ask you concerning matters on which disagreement between the Wahhabis and Ahl al-Sunnah wa l-Jama‘ah is well-known.

What is your opinion on an extensive journey [*shadd al-rihal*] to visit the master of all beings – upon him the most excellent of salutations and greetings and upon his progeny and his companions? Which of the two matters is more desirable to you and more virtuous according to your mashayikh for the visitor: does he intend at the time of travelling for visiting to visit him – upon him be peace – or does he intend the mosque also? The Wahhabis have said that the traveller to Madinah must not intend [visiting anything] besides the Prophetic Mosque.

Answer:

In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Merciful

From Him we seek help and the granting of success, and in His hand are the reigns of verification.

While praising [Allah], and sending prayers and peace [on His Prophet], [I say]:

It should be known **firstly**, before we begin to answer, that we and our mashayikh – Allah’s pleasure be on them all – and our entire group and congregation are, by Allah’s praise:

- Imitators of the guide of creation, the pinnacle of Islam, the valiant Imam, the greatest Imam, Abu Hanifah al-Nu‘man – Allah Exalted is He be pleased with him – in the peripherals;
- And followers of the noble Imam Abu al-Hasan al-Ash‘ari and the noble Imam Abu Mansur al-Maturidi (Allah be pleased with them) in creed and the fundamentals;
- And affiliates, from amongst the paths of the Sufis, to the lofty path ascribed to the Naqshbandi masters and to the pure path ascribed to the Chisti masters and to the glorious path ascribed to the Qadiri masters and to the approved path ascribed to the Suhrawardi masters (Allah be pleased with them all).

Then, **secondly**, we do not pronounce a statement regarding the religion unless we have evidence for it from the Book, Sunnah and the consensus of the ummah or the statement of the Imams of the [Hanafi] madhhab, and despite this we do not claim that we are free from error and forgetfulness in the erring of the pen and slip of the tongue. Thus, if it is manifest to us that we erred in a statement, whether from the fundamentals or the peripherals, shyness will not prevent us from going back on it, and we will publicise the retraction. Why not, when our imams – Allah’s pleasure be on them – have indeed gone back on many of their statements such that the Imam of the respected Haram of Allah – Exalted is He – our Imam, al-Shafi‘i – Allah be pleased with him – left no issue but he has therein a new statement, and the Sahabah – Allah be pleased with them all – retracted in issues to the statements of some [others] from them as is not hidden to the observer of hadith. Hence, if one of the ‘ulama were to claim that we made an error in a ruling, if it is from beliefs, he must establish [it] with a clear text from the imams of Kalam, and if it is from the peripherals, he must substantiate his explanation on the preponderant opinion of the imams of the madhhabs. When he does this,

there will not be from us, if Allah – Exalted is He – wills, but wilful acceptance with the heart and tongue, and abundant thanks with the heart and limbs.

Thirdly, indeed in the origin of the terminology in the lands of India, the unqualified usage of "Wahhabi" was for one who abandoned *taqlid* of the imams – Allah Exalted is He be pleased with them – and then its scope was broadened and its usage became dominant for one who practiced the glorious Sunnah and left the reprehensible innovated affairs and the ugly customs until it spread in Bombay and its corners that one who prohibits prostration to the graves of the saints and circumambulation of them, he is a Wahhabi, rather, one who announced publicly the prohibition of usury, he is a Wahhabi, even if he is from the elders of the adherents of Islam and their great ones; then its scope was broadened until it became an insult, and thus [based] on this if a man from the inhabitants of India said to a man that he is a Wahhabi, it does not indicate that he has a corrupt belief, rather it indicates that he is a Sunni Hanafi, practicing on the Sunnah, avoiding innovation and fearful of Allah – Exalted is He – in perpetrating [acts of] disobedience. Since our mashayikh – Allah Exalted is He be pleased with them – strove to revive the Sunnah and attempted to extinguish the fire of innovation, the army of Iblis was angered by them, and they distorted their speech and slandered them and concocted lies against them and accused them of [being] Wahhabi, and far removed are they from that. Nay, this is the Sunnah of Allah which He instituted with respect to the elite of His friends, as Allah – Exalted is He – said in His Book: "Thus have We appointed unto every prophet an adversary - devils of humankind and jinn who inspire in one another plausible discourse through guile. If thy Lord willed, they would not do so; so leave them alone with their devising." (6:112) Since this was [the case] with the Prophets – Allah's prayers be on them and His peace – it must [continue] in their successors and those who stand in their place, as Allah's Messenger – Allah bless him and grant him peace – said: "We, assemblies of Prophets, are the most severely tried of people, then the most like [us] and then the most like [them]," so their share is filled and their reward is completed for them. Thus, those who invented innovations and inclined towards desires and adopted their desires as gods and threw their souls into the pit of annihilation, they invented against us lies and falsehoods, and attributed to us heresies. So when a statement conflicting with the [correct] madhhab is attributed to us in your presence, pay no heed to it and do not think of us but good, and if there is doubt in your breasts, write to us, for indeed we will inform you of the reality of the situation and the truth of the statement, for indeed you are us to us the pivot of the sphere of Islam.

Clarification of the answer:

According to us and according to our mashayikh visiting the grave of the master of the Messengers – my soul be his sacrifice – is from the greatest of nearing acts and the most important of rewarded acts and the most fruitful in attaining degrees, rather is close to the obligations, even if its acquisition is by extensive journeying and expending health and wealth and one intends at the time of travel to visit him – upon him a million greetings and peace – and he intends along with it visiting his mosque – Allah bless him and grant him peace – and other than it from the plots of land and noble sites, rather the preferred [intention] is what the valiant 'Allamah Ibn al-Humam said that is to only intend visiting his grave – upon him blessing and peace – and then visit the mosque once he arrives, because in that is greater respect and admiration of him – Allah bless him and grant him peace – and this agrees with his – Allah bless him and grant him peace – saying, "Whoever comes to me as a visitor, no need driving him but visiting me, it is a duty upon me that I become an intercessor for him on the Day of Resurrection." Such was transmitted by the great Gnostic Mulla Jami that he separated the visit from Hajj, and this is closer to the path of the lovers.

As for what the Wahhabis said that the traveller to the illuminated city – on its resident a million greetings – does not intend but the noble mosque, adducing as evidence his – upon him blessing and

peace – saying "Do not extensively journey but to three mosques," it is rejected because the hadith does not indicate prohibition at all, rather, if a possessor of understanding were to consider carefully, he would know that by indication of the text it proves the permissibility [of intending to visit the grave], because the rationale (*'illah*) for which the three mosques are excluded from the generality of mosques and plots of land is the excellence specified to them, and such [excellence] is found in more abundance in the noble plot of land [where he is buried], for the noble plot of land and the lofty area which joins his – Allah bless him and grant him peace – limbs is more virtuous absolutely than even the Ka'bah and the Throne and the Seat as stated by our jurists – Allah be pleased with them, and since the mosques are excluded due to this special excellence, it is more worthy, and then again more worthy, that the blessed plot of land be excluded for that absolute excellence.

The issue as we mentioned, rather in more detail than it, was expressed by our shaykh, the great scholar, the sun of the practicing 'ulama, Mawlana Rashid Ahmad al-Gangohi – Allah sanctify his mighty secret – in his treatise Zubdat al-Manasik on the virtue of visiting the illuminated city, and it has been printed several times. Also on this noble subject is a treatise by the shaykh of our mashayikh, Mawlana Mufti Sadr al-Din al-Dihlawi – Allah sanctify his mighty secret – in which he erected a terrible calamity against the Wahhabis and those who agree with them, and he produced definite proofs and shinning evidences which he called Ahsan al-Maqal fi Sharh Hadith La Tashuddu al-Rihal, [which is] printed and well-known, so that should be referred to. And Allah – Exalted is He – knows best.

Questions Three and Four

Is it [permissible] for a man to take a means (*tawassala*) in his supplication through the Prophet – Allah bless him and grant him peace – after [his] death or not? Is taking a means (*tawassul*) through righteous predecessors, from the prophets and truthful saints (*siddiqin*) and martyrs, and the Friends of the Lord of the Worlds, permissible according to you or not?

Answer

According to us and according to our mashayikh taking a means in supplications through Prophets and the righteous, from the Friends, martyrs and truthful saints, is permissible during their lifetime and after their death in that one says: "O Allah! I take so-and-so as a means to You that you accept my supplication and You accomplish my need," etc. as stated by our shaykh and our master Shah Muhammad Ishaq al-Dehlawi thumma al-Muhajir al-Makki; and then our shaykh and our master Rashid Ahmad al-Gangohi – Allah's mercy on them – clarified it in his Fatawa which is in this time widespread and abundant in the hands of people, and this issue is mentioned on page 93 of the first volume of it, so whoever wishes may refer to it.

Question Five

What is your position in regards to the life of the Prophet – upon him blessing and peace - in his noble grave? Is that a matter exclusive to him or is it only an intermediary (*barzakhiyyah*) life like the rest of the believers?

Answer

According to us and according to our elders, the Prophet - Allah bless him and grant him peace - is alive in his grave. His life is a material life free from any responsibility, and it is exclusive to him - Allah bless him and grant him peace – and all the Prophets – Allah's blessings be upon them - and the martyrs, not an intermediary life, as is the case with the remainder of the believers, rather for all of mankind; as explicated by 'Allamah al-Suyuti in his treatise *Inba' al-Adhkiya' bi Hayat al-Anbiya'* (Enlightening the Intelligent About the Lives of the Prophets), where he said:

"Shaykh Taqi al-Din al-Subki said, 'The life of the prophets and martyrs in their grave is like their life in this world. The prayer of the prophet Musa - upon him be peace - in his grave testifies to this, as prayer requires a living body…"

Subsequently, it is established through this that his life is [both] material and intermediary, due to its being in the intermediary realm (*'alam al-barzakh*).

An entire treatise, scrupulously referenced, articulately expressed and unparalleled, has been written in relation to this topic by our shaykh, the sun of Islam and religion, Muhammad [Qasim al-Nanotwi] the distributer of the sciences to those who sought benefit [from him] - Allah sanctify his mighty secret. It has been printed and is currently widely-available amongst the people, whose title is *Abe Hayat* (The Water of Life).

Question Six

Can a supplicant in the Prophetic Masjid (*al-masjid al-nabawi*) face the exalted grave and ask from his honourable Protector, using the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) as an intermediary (*mutawassilan bi 'l-nabi)*?

Answer

The jurists have differed in this matter, as Mulla 'Ali al-Qari (may Allah have mercy on him) has mentioned in *al-Maslak al-Mutaqassit*. He states:

"Realize that some of our elders such as [Imam] Abu 'l-Layth and those who followed him such as [Imam] Kirmani and [Imam] Saruji mentioned that the one visiting [the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace)] should stand facing the *qiblah*." [Imam] Hasan has narrated the same on the authority of Imam Abu Hanifah (may Allah be pleased with them).

He then states, [however] on the authority of [Imam] Ibn al-Humam that what has been transmitted from Abu 'l-Layth [should be] rejected due to the narration of [Imam] Abu Hanifah on the authority of Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) that he stated:

"It is from the *sunnah* that you approach the grave of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and stand facing his grave. Then you should say, "May the peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah be upon you, O' Prophet!"

He (Mulla 'Ali al-Qari) then supported this stance with another narration transmitted by Majd al-Din the linguist [al-Fayruzabadi] (may Allah be pleased with him) on the authority of Ibn al-Mubarak (may Allah be pleased with him) that he stated:

"I heard Abu Hanifah (may Allah have mercy on him) saying: 'Once Ayyub al-Sakhtiyani (may Allah have mercy on him) came upon us when I was in Madinah. I said [to myself]: 'I shall observe what he does.' Thereafter, he placed his back towards the *qiblah* and his face towards the face of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and wept truly, not simply imitating the act of weeping. He held the status of a true jurist.'"

Following his transmission [of this narration], the great scholar [Mulla 'Ali] al-Qari (may Allah have mercy on him) then stated:

"In this account lies an indication that this is the preferred position of the Imam [Abu Hanifah], after once being uncertain regarding the desirable view."

He then states:

"Further, it is also possible to reconcile between the two narrations…"

Thus it is apparent that both matters are permissible. However, the preferred position is that during the duration of the visit, one should face his noble face (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). This is the position accepted by us, and it is our practice and the practice of our elders (*mashayikh*). This [act of facing the face of the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace)] is also the verdict concerning supplication (*du'a*) as has been narrated on the authority of Imam Malik (may Allah have mercy on him) when a caliph once asked him [about this issue]. Mawlana Ganghohi (may Allah have mercy on him) has also expressed this opinion explicitly in his treatise *Zubdat al-Manasik*

(The Finest of the Rituals). As for the issue pertaining to supplicating to Allah through an intermediary, this has already been discussed in questions three and four.

Question Seven

What is your opinion on excessively sending praise on the Prophet – Allah bless him and grant him peace – and reciting Dala'il al-Khayrat or the Awrad (litanies)?

Answer

Excessively sending praise on the Prophet – Allah bless him and grant him peace – is desirable according to us and it is from the most hopeful of the acts of obedience and the most beloved of desirable acts, whether it is recitation of al-Dala'il or the litanies on blessings compiled on it or other than it. However, the most virtuous according to us is what is authentic in his wording – Allah bless him and grant him peace – and if one were to send blessing with other than what was transmitted from him – Allah bless him and grant him peace – it is not devoid of virtue and it merits the good tidings of "Whoever sends blessing on me once, Allah sends blessing on him ten times."

Our shaykh 'Allamah al-Gangohi would recite al-Dala'il, and likewise, other mashayikh from our masters. And our master and our guide the pivot of the world, the revered Hajj Imdad Allah – Allah sanctify his mighty secret – wrote [it] amongst his councils and he instructed his disciples to divide it into set-portions [to be recited regularly], and they would narrate al-Dala'il in transmission, and Mawlana al-Gangohi – Allah's mercy be upon him – would issue licences for al-Dala'il.

Question Eight, Nine and Ten

Is it valid for a man to imitate one of the four imams in all of the fundamentals and the peripherals or not? Assuming the validity, is it preferable or obligatory? And who do you imitate from the imams in peripherals and fundamentals?

Answer

It is necessary for a man in this time to imitate one of the four imams – Allah Exalted is He be pleased with them – rather it is obligatory, for indeed we have experienced frequently that hopes to abandon *taqlid* of the imams and follow the opinions of one's self and its desires is descent into the pit of apostasy and heresy – Allah protect us from it – and due to this, we and our mashayikh are imitators in fundamentals and peripherals of the Imam of the Muslims Abu Hanifah – Allah Exalted is He be pleased with him – Allah cause us to die on it and gather us in his band.

Our mashayikh have many compilations on this, spread and well-known in all regions [of the world].

Question Eleven

Is preoccupation with the practices of the Sufis and their pledge permissible according to you, and do you believe in the validity of acquiring internal effusions from the breasts of the elders and their graves, and do the people of *suluk* benefit from the spirituality of the great masters or not?

Answer

It is preferable according to us when people finish from correcting beliefs and acquire the necessary matters in the Shari'ah to pledge to a shaykh feet firm on the Shariah, abstinent in the world, desirous of the afterlife, having cut off the obstacles of the self and acquainted himself with the saving things and avoiding the destructive things, complete and perfected, and he places his hand in his hand, and he imprisons his sight in his sight, and he engages in the engagement of the Sufis of remembrance and thought, and complete annihilation therein, and he acquires the affiliation which is the greatest blessing and the biggest booty which is expressed in the language of the Shari'ah as Ihsan (excellence).

As for one for whom this is not possible and he is incapable of this, it is sufficient for him to tread their paths, and associate with their group, for indeed Allah's Messenger – Allah bless him and grant him peace - said: "A man is with the one he loved. Those are a people whose sitting-partner will not be unfortunate."

And by the praise of Allah – Exalted is He – and the beauty of His blessing, we and our mashayikh have entered into their pledge and have engaged in their practices and engaged in instruction and teaching, and all praise to Allah on that.

As for taking benefit from the spirituality of the great masters and acquiring internal effusions from their breasts and their graves, it is valid according to the known path amongst its people and its elite, not as it is widespread amongst the commoners.

Question Twelve

Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab al-Najdi would legitimise the bloods and properties and honours of Muslims and would accuse all of mankind of *shirk* and insult the predecessors, so what is your opinion of that, and do you allow the anathematisation of the predecessors and the Muslims and the people of the Qiblah, or what is your methodology?

Answer

Their ruling according to us is what the author of al-Durr al-Mukhtar said: “The Khawarij are a violent group that rebelled against ‘Ali due to an interpretation by which they believed that he was on falsehood and disbelief or disobedience making fighting him obligatory according to their interpretation. They legitimise our bloods and our properties and they insult our women,” until he said, “Their ruling is the ruling of rebels,” and then he said, “We do not anathematise them only due to it being from interpretation although false.” Al-Shami said in his marginalia: “As has occurred in our time in the followers of ‘Abd al-Wahhab who came out from Najd and dominated the two Harams and would claim to belong to the madhhab of the Hanbalis but they believed that they are the Muslims and those who disagreed with their belief are polytheists, and due to this they legitimised the slaughter of the Ahl al-Sunnah and the slaughter of their ‘ulama until Allah broke their supremacy.”

Then I say: Neither he nor any of his followers and his party are from our mashayikh in a chain from the chains of knowledge of jurisprudence, hadith, fiqh and tasawwuf. As for making the bloods, properties and honours of Muslims permissible, it is either with right or without right. If it is without right, it is either without interpretation, hence disbelief and departure from Islam, and if it is with interpretation not admissible in the Shari‘ah, it is open violation. Or it is with right, thus permissible, rather obligatory.

As for anathematising the predecessors of the Muslims, far be it that we anathematise any of them, rather it is according to us Rafidism, and innovation in the religion. As for the people of Qiblah from the innovators, we do not anathematise them so long as they do not deny a necessary matter from the immediate necessities of the religion, so when denial of a matter necessary in the religion is established we anathematise them and we are cautious therein. This is our practice and the practice of our mashayikh – Allah’s mercy be on them.

Questions Thirteen and Fourteen

What is your opinion on the likes of His – Exalted is He – statement “The Most Merciful ascended the Throne?” Do you allow the affirmation of direction and place for the Creator – Exalted is He – or what is your opinion regarding it?

Answer

Our opinion regarding the likes of these verses is that we believe in them, and “how?” is not asked, and we believe in Allah – Glorified and Exalted is He – transcendent and pure of the attributes of creatures and from the qualities of imperfection and temporality as is the opinion of our predecessors. As for what the latecomers from our imams said on these verses, interpreting them with sound interpretations, permissible linguistically and legally, in that it is possible that the intent of ascension is domination and of hand is power etc. to make it accessible to the understandings of the deficient, it is also correct according to us.

As for direction and place, we do not allow affirming them for Him – Exalted is He – and we say that He – Exalted is He – is pure and transcendent beyond them and from all qualities of temporality.

Question Fifteen

Do you consider any being better than the Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace)?

Answer

Our belief and the belief of our elders is that our chief, our master, our beloved and our intercessor, Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and grant him peace), is the best of all creatures and the best of them in the presence of Allah (Exalted is He). None is comparable to him, rather [none] come close to him (Allah bless him and grant him peace) in proximity to Allah (Exalted is He) and the elevation of his rank in His presence. He is the chief of the Prophets and Messengers and the seal of the purified and the Prophets as established in the texts. This is what we believe and acquiesce to Allah (Exalted is He). Our elders have expressed this in more than one book.

Question Sixteen

Do you allow the existence of a prophet after the Prophet (upon him blessing and peace), while he is the Seal of the Prophets and the meaning of his (upon him be peace) statement “there is no prophet after me” and those [statements] resembling it, have been mass-transmitted, and *ijma’* has convened on this? What is your opinion of one who allows the incidence of this despite the presence of these texts? Have any of you or your elders said this?

Answer:

Our belief and the belief of our elders is that our chief, our master, our beloved and our intercessor, Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and grant him peace), is the Seal of the Prophets and there is no prophet after him, as Allah (Blessed and Exalted is He) said in His Book, “But he is the messenger of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets” (33:40). This is established in many hadiths that are *mutawatir* in meaning, by consensus of the *ummah*. Far be it that one of us said something contrary to this, since the one who denies this is according to us a disbeliever because he denies decisive and unequivocal texts.

Yes, our teacher and our master, chief of the intelligent scrutinisers, Mawlawi Muhammad Qasim al-Nanotwi (Allah Exalted is He have mercy on him), produced a novel insight by his critical mind, completing his sealship (*khatamiyyah*) in a complete manner and perfecting it in a perfect manner, as he (Allah Exalted is He have mercy on him) said in his treatise entitled *Tahdhir al-Nas*, the upshot of which is that:

Sealship is a genus under which are two species:

The first of them is “chronological sealship” (*khatamiyya zamaniyya*) which is that the time of his prophethood (Allah bless him and grant him peace) occurs after the time of the prophethood of all other Prophets and he is thus a chronological seal of their prophethood.

The second is “essential sealship” (*khatamiyya dhatiyyah*), which is that by the essence of his (Allah bless him and grant him peace) prophethood, the prophethood of all the Prophets is sealed and culminates in it. Just as he (Allah bless him and grant him peace) is the seal of the Prophets in time, he (Allah bless him and grant him peace) is also the seal of the Prophets in essence, since all that is accidental is terminated by that which is essential, culminate in it and do not surpass it.

Since his (Allah bless him and grant him peace) prophethood is essential and the prophethood of other Prophets is accidental, because their prophethood (upon them be peace) was secondary to his (Allah bless him and grant him peace) prophethood and he is the most perfect and honourable particular, the pole of the domain of prophethood and messengership and the medium of its contraction, he is [both] the chronological and essential seal of the Prophets. His sealship is not limited to chronological sealship since it is neither a big virtue nor an increase in his rank that his (Allah bless him and grant him peace) time comes after the time of the Prophets before him, rather complete supremacy, extreme elevation, splendid glory and radiant pride reaches its utmost when his (Allah bless him and grant him peace) sealship is [both] essential and chronological. As regards to when it is limited to chronological sealship, his supremacy and his (Allah bless him and grant him peace) elevation in its perfection is not attained and his complete and comprehensive excellence is not acquired.

This insight from him (Allah Exalted is He have mercy on him) became apparent in his demonstration of the magnitude of his (Allah bless him and grant him peace) rank, the immensity of his proof, his

exaltation and his veneration as concluded by the verifiers (*muhaqqiqun*) from our masters, the *'ulama*, like al-Shaykh al-Akbar [ibn al-Arabi], al-Taqi al-Subki and the Pole of Existence Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddus al-Gongohi (Allah Exalted is He have mercy on them). The mind of many of the ancient *'ulama* and the erudite intellectuals, in what we believe and perceive, did not reach the pavilions of his courtyard.

This [belief], according to the Indian innovators, is disbelief and misguidance. They whisper to their followers and their friends that it is denial of the sealship (Allah bless him and grant him peace)[4]. [This is] far, very far! By my life, this is undoubtedly the most slanderous calumny and the greatest falsehood and slander. Nothing prompted them to this except contempt, malice, envy and hatred for the people of Allah (Exalted is He) and the elite of His servants. This is how the Divine Pattern (*sunnat Allah*) proceeds when it comes to His Prophets and His Friends.

Question Seventeen

Do you say that the Prophet – Allah bless him and grant him peace – is not superior to us but like the superiority of an elder brother to a younger brother, and nothing more? Did one of you write such content in a book?

Answer

None of us, nor our noble predecessors, believe this at all. We do not believe a man from the weak ones in faith even utter the like of such falsehood. Whoever says that the Prophet – upon him peace – has no superiority over us but as an elder brother is superior to the younger, we believe with respect to him that he is outside the domain of faith. The works of all the elders state the opposite of this, and they clarified and expressed and reviewed the modes of his excellences and his – upon him peace – favour upon us, the assembly of the ummah, in a number of ways, whereby it is not possible to affirm the like of one of these things to any person from the creatures, let alone its entirety. If one invents the like of such flimsy falsehood upon us or upon our predecessors, it is baseless and should not be heeded at all, for indeed his – upon him peace – being the most virtuous of all humanity and the most honourable of all creation and his – upon him peace – chieftaincy over all Prophets and his imamate over the Prophets is from the decisive matters which is not possible for the lowest Muslim to have doubt about it at all. Despite this, if one attributes to us the likes of such falsehoods, let him clarify its place from our works so we can show to every fair understanding person his ignorance and his wrong understanding along with his apostasy and evil religiosity, by His – Exalted is He – might and His powerful strength.

Question Eighteen

Do you say that the knowledge of the Prophet (upon him be peace) is limited only to the laws of the Shari'ah or was he given knowledge pertaining to the Essence, Attributes and Acts of the Maker (Exalted is His Name), the hidden secrets (*al-asrar al-khafiyyah*), the divine judgement (*al-hukm al-ilahiyyah*) and other than of that of which none from creation, whoever he may be, reached the pavilions of his knowledge?

Answer

We say with the tongue and we believe in the heart that our master, the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and grant him peace), is the most knowledgeable of all creation, with sciences pertaining to the Essence and Attributes [of Allah], legislations (*tashri'at*), of the practical rules and the theoretical rules, the true realties and the hidden secrets, and other sciences, that none from creation reached the pavilions of his courtyard, neither an angel brought nigh nor a messenger sent.

Indeed he was given the knowledge of the first and the last and Allah's grace upon him was immense (Qur'an 4:113). However, this does not entail knowledge of every particular from the temporal matters in every moment from the moments of time, such that the concealment of part of it from his noble vision and his exalted knowledge harms his (upon him be peace) being the most learned of all creation, and [harms] the extensiveness of his knowledge and the excellence of his cognizance, even if one other than him from creatures and servants becomes cognizant of it. Sulayman (upon him be peace) being the most learned [in his time] was not harmed by the concealment [from him] of what Hudhud had comprehended of strange incidents, as it says in the Qur'an, "He said: I comprehend that which you do not comprehend and I have brought to you a sure information from Sheba" (Qur'an 27:22).

Question Nineteen

Do you believe that Iblis, the accursed, is more knowledgeable than the Chief Existent (upon him be peace) and has more expansive knowledge than him in absolute terms? Have you written this in a book? And how do you judge one who believes this?

Answer:

A review of this issue preceded from us, that the Prophet (upon him be peace) is the most knowledgeable of creation in general, of the sciences, the judgement, the secrets and other than that from the Kingdom of the Horizons, and we believe with certainty that one who says that so-and-so person is more knowledgeable than the Prophet (upon him be peace) has disbelieved. Our elders have given the verdict of disbelief for one who says that Iblis, the accursed, is more knowledgeable than the Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace), so how is it possible that this matter is in a certain book we authored?

However, the concealment of some insignificant particular things from the Prophet (upon him be peace) due to his inattention to it does not cause any defect in his (upon him be peace) being the most learned once it is established that he is the most knowledgeable of creation of the noble sciences that are fitting to his lofty station, just as cognizance of most of those insignificant things due to the intensity of Iblis's attention to them does not cause glory and perfection of knowledge in him, since this is not the criterion of virtue. Hereof, it is not correct to say that Iblis is more knowledgeable than the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and grant him peace) just as it is not correct to say about a child who knows some particulars that he is more knowledgeable than an erudite research scholar in the sciences from whom those particulars are hidden. We have recited unto you the story of Hudhud with Sulayman (upon our Prophet and upon him be peace) and his statement, "I comprehend that which you do not comprehend." The records of hadith and the books of tafsir are replete with abundant examples of this which are well-known amongst people.

The physicians are agreed that Plato and Galen and their likes are from the most knowledgeable of physicians about the qualities of diseases and their states, despite their knowledge that maggots are more knowledgeable about states of filth, their taste and their qualities. Hence, the absence of Plato's and Galen's knowledge of these despicable states does not harm their being the most learned, and none from the intelligent and the stupid will be satisfied with the view that maggots are more knowledgeable than Plato, although they have more extensive knowledge than Plato about the states of filth. The innovators of our lands affirm for the blessed prophetic soul (upon it a million greetings and peace) all the sciences of the base lowly things and the lofty virtuous things, saying that since he (upon him be peace) was the best of all creation, it is necessary that he possesses all of those sciences, every particular and every universal. We rejected the establishment of this matter using this corrupt analogy without a proof-text from the relied upon texts. Do you not see that every believer is more virtuous and more honourable than Iblis so following this logic it would be necessary that every person from the individuals of this *ummah* possesses the sciences of Iblis, and it would be necessary that Sulayman (upon our Prophet and upon him be peace) knew that which Hudhud knew, and that Plato and Galen knew all the knowledge of maggots? These concomitants are absurd in their entirety as is obvious.

This is a summary of what we said in *al-Barahin al-Qati'ah* in order to sever the veins of the foolish deviants and break the necks of the forging deceivers. Hence, our discussion about it was only in regards to some of these temporal particulars, and for this reason we used the demonstrative noun to indicate that the objective in affirmation and negation there was those particulars, and nothing besides [them]. However, the iniquitous distort the speech and do not fear the reckoning of the

Knowing King. We are certain that those who say that so-and-so individual is more knowledgeable than the Prophet (upon him be peace) is a disbeliever, as more than one of our respected *‘ulama* stated. And whoever concocts about us that which we did not say, upon him is [the burden of] proof, [and he should] fear the interrogation before the Recompensing King. Allah is witness over what we say.

Question Twenty

Do you believe that the knowledge of the Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) is equal to the knowledge of Zayd, Bakr and beasts or are you innocent of such [a belief]? Did Shaykh Ashraf ‘Ali al-Thanawi write such content in his treatise *Hifz al-Iman* or not? How do you judge one who believes this?

Answer

I say: this too is from the inventions and lies of the innovators. They distorted the meaning of the statement and, in their hatred, they produced the opposite of what the *shaykh* (Allah lengthen his shadow) intended (Allah confound them! How they are perverted!).

Shaykh ‘Allamah al-Thanawi in his treatise called *Hifz al-Iman*, which is a small treatise in which he answered three questions he was asked: the first is in regards to the prostration of respect (*al-sajdat al-ta’zimiyyah*) to graves, the second is in regards to circumambulation (*tawaf*) around graves and the third is in regards to the unqualified usage of the term *‘alim al-ghayb* (Knower of the Unseen) for our master, the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and grant him peace); the *shaykh* said, the upshot of which is:

This usage is not permissible even if it was with a [particular] interpretation, because it conceives of *shirk*, just as the usage of their statement *ra’ina* was prohibited in the Qur’an (2:104) and their statement “my male slave” (*‘abdi*) and “my female slave” (*amati*) [was prohibited] in the hadith, as transmitted by Muslim in his *Sahih* (*Kitab al-Alfaz min al-Adab wa Ghayriha*); since the general [usage of the term] *ghayb* in the legal usages is that for which no proof was erected and there is no means or path to its perception. [Based] on this, Allah (Exalted is He) said, “Say: None in the heavens or on earth, except Allah, knows the *ghayb*” (27:65), “Had I knowledge of the *ghayb*, I should have abundance of wealth” (7:188) and other verses. If this were allowed by interpretation, it would entail that it would be correct to use *khaliq* (Creator), *raziq* (Sustainer), *malik* (Master), *ma’bud* (Deity) and other attributes of Allah (Exalted is He), exclusive to His (Exalted is He) Essence, for the creation by an interpretation. It would also imply that by another interpretation the use of the term *‘alim al ghayb* would be negated from Allah (Exalted is He), since He (Exalted is He) is not the knower of *ghayb* by means of a medium or by accident, so would any sane religious person allow its negation [from Him]? Far be it, of course not.

Moreover, if this usage were correct for his holy essence (Allah bless him and grant him peace) according to the statement of a questioner, we will ask for clarification from him: what does he mean by this *ghayb*? Does he mean every particular from the particulars of *ghayb* or a part of it, whichever part it may be? If he intended a part of the *ghayb*, there is no speciality in this for the Chief of Messengers (Allah bless him and grant him peace), since the knowledge of some *ghayb*, even if it is little, is attainable by Zayd and ‘Amr, rather every child and madman, rather all animals and beasts, because every one of them knows something another does not know and [something that is] hidden from him. Hence, if the questioner permits the usage [of the term] *‘alim al ghayb* for one because of his knowledge of a part of the *ghayb*, it would be necessary for him to allow its usage for all those mentioned, and if that was the case, it would not then be from the perfections of prophethood because they all share in it; and if it is not the case, he will be asked for a distinction, and will find no path to it. [Here] ends the statement of Shaykh al-Thanawi.

So look, Allah have mercy on you, at the statement of the *shaykh*. You will not find even a trace of what the innovators invented. How farfetched for any Muslim to claim that the knowledge of Allah’s Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace) is equal to the knowledge of Zayd, Bakr and beasts.

Rather, the *shaykh* ruled by way of implication that one who claimed the permissibility of using knowledge of the *ghayb* for Allah's Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace) due to his knowledge of part of the *ghayb*, that it would be necessary for him to allow its usage for all men and beasts. How far this is from the equivalence of knowledge, which they fabricated about him! Allah's curse be on the liars.

We are convinced that any who believes that the knowledge of the Prophet (upon him be peace) is equal to [the knowledge of] Zayd, Bakr, beasts and madmen, is an absolute disbeliever. Far be it that the *shaykh* (his glory continue!) say such [a thing], and this would indeed be a strange thing.

Question Twenty One

Do you say that the commemoration of his (Allah bless him and grant him peace) birth is deemed blameworthy (*mustaqbah*) in the Shari‘ah, from the evil and prohibited innovations (*al-bid‘at al-sayyi’ah al-muharramah*), or [do you believe] otherwise?

Answer

Far be it that any of the Muslims say, let alone we, ourselves, say, that commemorating his noble birth (upon him blessing and peace), rather even commemorating the dust on his shoes and the urine of his (Allah bless him and grant him peace) camel, are deemed blameworthy in the Shari‘ah, from the evil and prohibited innovations; for, commemorating the states which have the least connection with the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and grant him peace) is from the most desirable of recommended acts (*ahabb al-mandubat*) and the greatest of preferable acts (*a‘la l-mustahabbat*) according to us, whether it is the commemoration of his noble birth or commemoration of his urine, feces, standing, sitting, sleeping and waking as is stated clearly in our treatise called *Al-Barahin al-Qati‘ah* at various junctures therein, and in the *fatwa*s of our teachers (*mashayikh*) (may Allah have mercy on them), as [is mentioned, for example] in the *fatwa*s of Mawlana Ahmad ‘Ali al-Muhaddith al-Saharanpuri, the student of Shah Muhammad Ishaq al-Dahlawi then al-Muhajir al-Makki, which we will quote in translation, that it may become an example of all [the other *fatwa*s]:

He (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked about the *milad* function, in which manner is it permissible and in which manner is it impermissible? He replied [saying] that:

Commemorating the noble birth of our master, the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and grant him peace) using sound narrations, during times devoid of the obligatory duties of worship, and in forms not contravening the path of the Companions and the people of the three generations whose greatness has been attested to, and [in forms not] containing beliefs that may be conceived of as *shirk* and *bid‘ah*, and in manners which do not contravene the conduct of the Companions which is the measure of his (peace be upon him) statement, “What I and my Companions are upon,” and in gatherings free from abominations of the Shari‘ah, is a cause for goodness and blessing, with the condition that it is accompanied by pure intention and sincerity and the belief that it is included within the totality of recommended good remembrances (*jumlat al-adhkar al-hasanah al-mandubah*), and is not restricted to a time from the times. When it is so, we do not know of any Muslim who rules it to be unlawful (*ghayr mashru‘*) or *bid‘ah*. To the end of the *fatwa*.

It is learnt from this that we do not denounce the commemoration of his noble birth. Rather, we denounce the abominable acts that are associated with it as you [may] have seen in the *mawludi* functions which [take place] in India, of narrating weak and forged narrations, the mixing of men and women, extravagance in lighting candles and decorations, and the belief that it is obligatory, by vilifying, insulting and anathematising those who do not attend their function with them, and other such abominations of the Shari‘ah which are almost not found to be absent from them. If they were free of these abominations, far be it that we say that commemorating the noble birth is abominable and a *bid‘ah*. How can this ugly belief be suspected of a Muslim? Hence, this attribution to us is also from the inventions of the deceptive lying deviants (Allah Exalted is He disgrace them, and curse them on land and sea and on smooth and rough land).

Question Twenty Two

Have you mentioned in a particular treatise that commemorating his – Allah bless him and grant him peace – birth is like Kanhaiya's Janmashtami (birth festival) or not?

Answer

This is also from the slanders against us and against our elders from the Dajjalic innovators. We have explained previously that commemorating him – upon him peace – is from the best of recommended acts and the most virtuous of preferable acts, so how can it be suspected of a Muslim that he says, refuge is from Allah, that the commemoration of the noble birth resembles the practice of the disbelievers? They only invented this slander from a text of Mawlana al-Gangohi – Allah sanctify his mighty secret – which we quoted in al-Barahin on page 141. Far be the shaykh from saying the like of this, and his intent is far by miles from what they attributed to him as will become apparent from what we will mention, which announces in the highest voice that whoever attributes to him what they mentioned is a liar and a slanderer.

The upshot of what the shaykh – Allah Exalted is He have mercy on him – mentioned in the discussion on Qiyam when mentioning the noble birth is that whoever believes the arrival of his noble soul from the world of spirits to the world of seeing and believes with certainty in the very noble birth in the Mawludi function, so he behaves in a manner that would be required in the moment of the actual past birth, he has erred and imitated the Majus in their belief of the birth of their deity known as Kanhaiya every year and their behaviour on that day in the way they would behave at the moment of the real birth; or [he] imitated the Rafidis of India in their treatment of our master al-Husayn and his followers from the martyrs of Karbala – Allah be pleased with them all – since they produce the story of all that was done with them in Karbala on the day of 'Ashura in word and deed, so they build a coffin, shroud, graves, and they are buried therein and they display the banners of war, and they dye the garments with blood and they wail upon them and [other] such superstitions that are not hidden to one who sees their conditions in these lands. The text of his statement, Arabised, is as follows:

"As for the justification of Qiyam due to the arrival of his – Allah bless him and grant him peace – soul from the world of spirits to the world of seeing, so they stand in veneration of him, this is also from their fooleries, because this reasoning demands standing upon the realisation of the very noble birth, and when does the birth recur in these days? Thus, this [belief in the] repetition of the noble birth is like the practice of the Majus of India since they produce the exact story of the birth of their deity Kanhaiya or like the Rafidis who transmit (i.e. verbally and practically) the martyrdom of the Ahl al-Bayt – Allah be pleased with them – every year, Allah's refuge [is sought]. This practice of theirs has become a retelling of the real noble birth; and this movement without doubt and reservation, is deserving of blame, prohibition and iniquity; rather, this practice of theirs is beyond the practice of those, for they do this once every year, and these people practice these fictional embellishments whenever they wish, and there is no precedent for this in the Shari'ah that one imagines something and behaves with it in the manner of its reality; rather, this is prohibited in the Shari'ah."

So look, Oh possessors of intelligence, that the revered shaykh – Allah sanctify his mighty secret – only repudiated the ignoramuses of India who, from them, believe this corrupt belief, who stand for the like of these corrupt imaginings. Hence, there is no comparison in this [statement] of the gathering in commemoration of the noble birth with the practice of the Majus and Rafidis, our elders be far removed from saying such a thing. However, the oppressors of the people of truth invent [lies] and deny the signs of Allah**.**

Question Twenty Three

Did the eminent shaykh, the scholar of his time, Mawlawi Rashid Ahmad Gangohi, say that the Creator (Exalted is He) has actually lied, and that the one who says this has not erred, or is this amongst the fabrications against him? Assuming the latter, how do you respond to what Al-Barelwi (Ahmad Rida Khan) mentioned that he has with him a photocopy of the respected shaykh's fatwa?

Answer

That which they attributed to the eminent and incomparable shaykh, the scholar of his time, the peerless of his age, Mawlana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi, that he said that the Creator (Exalted is His Eminence) actually lied and that the one who says this has not erred, it is a fabrication about him (Allah Most High have mercy on him) and is from the lies concocted by the deceptive and lying devils (Allah confound them! How they are perverted!). His respected person is innocent of such heresy and disbelief. The fatwa of the shaykh that was printed and published in volume one of his *Fatawa Rashidiyyah* (p. 119) falsifies their [claim]. It is in Arabic and was verified and stamped with the seals of the *'ulama* of Makkah al-Mukarramah. A copy of this question [and answer] follows:

In Allah's Name, the Ever Merciful, the Beneficent. We praise Him and send blessing on His noble Messenger. What is your view (your blessings last!) on Allah being described with the attribute of falsehood? And what is the ruling on the one who believes He lies? Provide us with an answer, and be rewarded.

Answer:

Allah (Exalted is He) is certainly transcendent beyond being described with falsehood, and no element of falsehood is found in His Speech, as Allah says, "Who is more truthful than Allah in speech?" (4:122) Whoever believes or professes that Allah lies, he is certainly an accursed disbeliever, and has opposed the Book, the Sunna and the Consensus of the Ummah.

Yes, the belief of the people of faith is: that which Allah foretold in the Qur'an, that Pharaoh, Haman and Abu Lahab are from the inhabitants of Hell, it is a decisive decision that He will not act contrary to, but Allah (Exalted is He) is Able to admit them into Paradise and is not incapable of this, but He will not do so by His choice.

Allah (Exalted is He!) said, "And if We had so willed, We could have given every soul its guidance, but the word from Me concerning evildoers took effect: that I will fill the Fire with the jinn and mankind together." (32:12). It is evident from this verse that had Allah wished, He would have made everybody believers but He does not contradict what He says, and this is all by choice, not coercion. He is a Doer by choice, acting as He wills.

This is the belief of all the *'ulama* of this Ummah, as Al-Baydawi said under the explanation of His statement (Exalted is He), "If you forgive them…" (5:118) that "the absence of forgiveness for *shirk* is a consequence of His threat, but it is not intrinsically impossible." Allah knows best the truth.

The lowly Rashid Ahmad Gangohi (may he be pardoned) wrote this.

A review of the endorsements of the *'ulama* of Al-Makkah al-Mukarramah, Allah increase its honour:

“All praise to the One Who is deserving of it, and from Him extends all help and guidance. That which ‘Allamah Rashid Ahmad said in reply as cited [above] is the truth from which there is no escape. Allah send blessings and peace on the Seal of the Prophets, his family and his companions.”

The servant of the Shari’ah, seeking tender grace, Muhammad Salih ibn al-Marhum Siddiq Kamal al-Hanafi (Allah support them), the present Mufti of Al-Makkah al-Mukarramah, ordered his signature.

The one hopeful of perfect attainment from His Lord, Muhammad Sa’id ibn Muhammad Babusayl at the Protected Makkah (Allah forgive him and his parents, and his teachers and all the Muslims) signed it.

Seeking pardon from the Giver of bestowals, Muhammad ‘Abid ibn al-Marhum Shaykh Husayn, Mufti of the Malikis at the Protected Land of Allah, [signed it].

“[After] sending blessing and peace; that which ‘Allamah Rashid Ahmad answered is sufficient and upon it is dependence, rather it is the truth from which there is no escape.”

Written by the lowly one, Khulf ibn Ibrahim, a servant of *ifta* (answering juristic problems) for Hanbalis, at the Noble Makkah.

The response to what Al-Barelwi said that he has in his possession a copy of the fatwa of the deceased shaykh in photocopy form containing what he mentioned, it is from his inventions that he invented and forged by himself, as a slander against the shaykh (Allah sanctify his secret). Such lies and slanders are insignificant for him, for he is the teacher of teachers in this and all of them are dependent on him in his time, and indeed he is a distorting manipulator and a scheming imposter, sometimes creating outright forgeries. He is not less than the Masih al-Qadiyani, since the latter claims messengership manifestly and openly, and the former conceals [hopes of] being the *mujaddid*, and anathematises (*yukaffiru*) the *‘ulama* of the Ummah, just as the Wahhabis, the followers of Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab, anathematise the Ummah (Allah Most High disgrace him as He disgraces them).

Question Twenty Four

Do you believe in the possibility of the occurrence of falsehood in a speech from the Speech of the Master (Great and Glorious is His Transcendence). If not, what then is your opinion?

Answer

We and our elders (Allah Most High have mercy on them) declare and are convinced that all speech that issued from the Creator (Great and Glorious is He) or will issue from Him is absolutely truthful, and it is certain that it concurs with reality. Undoubtedly, there is no trace of falsehood in any part of His (Exalted is He) Speech, nor any doubt about [the absence of] contravening reality [in His Speech]. Whoever believes contrary to this or conceives of a lie in any part of His Speech, is a disbeliever, apostate and heretic, and does not have even a trace of faith.

Question Twenty Five

Have you ascribed the view of "*imkan al-kadhib*" (the possibility of lying) to some of the Ash'aris? If so, what is meant by this? And do you have a proof-text for this view from the reliable scholars? Explain the matter to us as it is.

Answer

This began as a dispute between us and the Indian logicians and innovators about the capacity of the Maker (Transcendent is He) to act contrary to what He promised, informed, intended, etc. They said that acting contrary to these things is absent from Allah's Ancient Power (*qudrah qadimah*), hypothetically impossible (*mustahil aqlan*), impossible to exist within His capacity, and it is necessary for Him [to act] in accordance with His promise, report, intent and knowledge. We said: such things are certainly capacitated, but their occurrence (*wuqu'*) is not possible, according to the Ahl al-Sunna wa l-Jama'a from the Ash'aris and Maturidis, textually and logically according to the Maturidis, and only textually according to the Ash'aris.

They objected that if the capacity of these things were possible, it would entail the possibility of falsehood and this is certainly not in His capacity and is intrinsically impossible (*mustahil dhatan*). We responded using a variety of answers from the *kalam*-scholars, of which was: even if the concomitance of the possibility of falsehood in acting contrary to the promise, reports etc. in His capacity is accepted, it too is not intrinsically impossible, rather, like oppression and impudence, it is intrinsically capacitated, but it is textually and logically impossible, or just textually, as more than one of the Imams have espoused.

When they saw these responses they caused corruption in the land and attributed to us [the position of] allowing imperfections (*naqs*) in relation to His Holiness (Blessed and Exalted is He), and they spread this accusation amongst the foolish and the ignorant to create enmity in the common people and to seek enjoyment and popularity amongst men. They reached the roads of the heavens in fabrication when they forged an image from themselves [expressing] the actuality (*fi'liyyah*) of falsehood without fearing the Knowing King. When Indians became aware of their scheming, they [i.e. the innovators] sought help from the noble *'ulama* of the two Sanctuaries because they know they are ignorant of their evil and the reality of the views of our *'ulama*.

Their likeness is but the likeness of the Mu'tazilah as compared with the Ahl al-Sunna wa l-Jama'a, since they [i.e. the Mu'tazilah] excluded rewarding the sinner (*ithabat al-'asi*) and punishing the obedient (*'iqab al-muti'*) from the Ancient Power and made justice (*'adl*) necessary for Allah's essence. They called themselves "the advocates of justice and transcendence" and they attributed injustice, unconscientiousness and ugliness to the *'ulama* of Ahl al-Sunna wa l-Jama'a. So just as the predecessors of Ahl al-Sunna wa l-Jama'a did not mind their ignorance and did not permit incapacity in relation to Him (Transcendent and Exalted is He!) in the aforementioned injustice, and broadened the Ancient Power while also removing imperfections from His Noble Absolute Self, and perfecting the transcendence and sanctity of His Lofty Holiness, saying that, "Your understanding of the possibility of the capacity to punish the obedient and reward the sinner as an imperfection, is but the consequence of [following] despicable philosophers"; in the same way, we say to them, "Your understanding of the ability to act contrary to the promise, report and truth and the likes of them, as an imperfection, although their issuance (*sudur*) from Him (Exalted is He) is impossible, only textually, or rationally and textually, is but the misfortune of philosophy and logic and your adverse ignorance."

They do what they do because of the absolute transcendence [of Allah], but they are unable to perfect the Power and broaden it. As for our predecessors, the Ahl al-Sunna wa l-Jama'a, they combined between the two matters, of widening the Power and perfecting transcendence for the Necessary (Transcendent and Exalted is He).

This is what we mentioned in *Al-Barahin* in summary-form, and here are some of the proof-texts in support of it from the relied upon books of the *madhhab*:

(1) It says in *Sharh al-Mawaqif*:

"All the Mu'tazilites and Kharijites make punishing the one who incurs a major sin necessary when he dies without repentance and they do not allow Allah to pardon him for two reasons:

"First, He (Exalted is He) made it a promise to punish major sins and informed [us] of this i.e. punishment because of it, so if He does not punish for a major sin and pardons, it would entail reneging on His threat and falsehood in His speech, which are impossible. The answer is, the conclusion of this [argument] is that punishment will [actually] occur, so where is the [intrinsic] necessity of punishment, on which is our discussion, since there is no doubt that non-necessity [of punishment] along with [its] occurrence does not entail reneging and falsehood? It cannot be said that it entails their possibility which is also impossible, because we say: its impossibility is prohibited. How so, when they are from the possibilities included in His (Exalted is He) Power?" End [quote from *Sharh al-Mawaqif*]

(2) In *Sharh al-Maqasid* by 'Allamah al-Taftazani (Allah Most High have mercy on him) at the end of the discussion on Power, [he says]:

"The deniers of the inclusiveness of His Power are many groups; of them are Al-Nazzam and his [Mu'tazilite] followers who say that He does not have power over ignorance, falsehood and oppression and all ugly acts (*qaba'ih*), for if their creation were in His capacity, their issuance (*sudur*) from Him would be possible, and this concomitant (*lazim*) is false because it results in impudence (*safah*) if He knows the ugliness of this and its dispensability, and in ignorance if He is not knowing. The response is: we do not concede the ugliness of a thing in relation to Him, how [can we accept this] when He is in complete control of His kingdom? And if it [i.e. ugliness in relation to Him] is conceded, Power over it does not negate the impossibility of its issuance from Him, by consideration of the presence of disposal and the absence of need, even if it is possible (*mumkinan*)." End [quote from *Sharh al-Maqasid*], in summary-form.

(3) It says in *al-Musayarah* and its commentary *Al-Musamarah* by 'Allamah al-Muhaqqiq Kamal ibn al-Humam al-Hanafi and his student Ibn Abi l-Sharif al-Maqdisi al-Shafi'i (Allah Most High have mercy on them), the text of which is:

"Then he i.e. the author of *Al-'Umdah* said, 'Allah (Exalted is He) is not described with Power over oppression, impudence and falsehood because the impossible is not included in [His] Power, i.e. it is improper for it to pertain to them. According to the Mu'tazilah, He (Exalted is He) is Able over all that but does not do [them].' End quote from *Al-'Umda*.

"It appears as though he altered that which he transmitted from the Mu'tazilah, since there is no doubt that the absence of power over what was mentioned, is the *madhhab* of the Mu'tazilah. As for its presence, i.e. power over what was mentioned, and then abstention from pertaining to them by choice, to the *madhhab*, i.e. it is to the *madhhab* of the Ash'aris, more fitting than it is to the *madhhab* of the Mu'tazilah. It is obvious that this more fitting [position] is also included in

transcendence, since there is no doubt that abstention therefrom i.e. from those things mentioned of oppression, impudence and falsehood, is from the matter of transcendence, from that which does not befit the majesty of His Holiness (Exalted is He).

"Hence, it should be understood by the foregone premise, i.e. the intellect understands, which of the two views are more excessive in transcendence from indecencies: is it power over it, i.e. what was mentioned from the three matters, along with impossibility, i.e. His abstention from it by choosing that abstention; or its impossibility from Him because of the absence of power over it? It is incumbent to rely on the more inclusive of the two statements in transcendence, which is the statement more fitting to the *madhhab* of the Ash'aris." End [quote from *al-Musamarah*].

(4) In *Hawashi al-Kalnabwi 'ala Sharh al-'Aqa'id al-Adudiyyah* by Al-Muhaqqiq al-Dawwani (Allah Most High have mercy on them) [it is mentioned], the text of which is:

"In sum, lying being ugly in the uttered-speech (*al-kalam al-lafzi*), in the sense that it is an attribute of deficiency, is prohibited according to the Ash'aris. That is why Al-Sharif al-Muhaqqiq (al-Jurjani) said it is from the totality of the possibilities (*mumkinat*), and acquiring decisive knowledge of its non-occurrence in His speech by consensus of the scholars and the Prophets (upon them be peace) does not negate its intrinsic possibility like all decisive knowledge of normal occurrences (*al-'ulum al-'adiya*) and it does not negate what Imam al-Razi said," to the end.

(5) In *Tahrir al-Usul* by the author of *Fath al-Qadir*, Imam ibn al-Humam, and its commentary by Ibn Amir al-Hajj (Allah Most High have mercy on them) [they say], the text of which is:

"Therefore – i.e. since whatever is conceived as a deficiency is impossible for Him – the decisiveness of the impossibility of attributing Him – i.e. Allah (Exalted is He) – with lying and the like of it (Transcendent is He beyond that) becomes apparent. Also, if His act being attributed with ugliness was possible, confidence in the integrity of His promise, the integrity of His speech besides it – i.e. [besides] His (Exalted is He) promise – and the integrity of His Prophets would disappear – i.e. in principle, His integrity would be uncertain.

"According to the Ash'aris, He (Exalted is He) is certainly not attributed with ugly acts, but they are not rationally impossible, like all of creation. [This is] just like all the sciences in which one of two opposites being the reality is certain, but the other is not impossible, if it were assumed that it is the reality; just like the certainty of Mecca and Baghdad – i.e. their existence – since their non-existence is not rationally impossible. Therefore – i.e. when the matter is such – confidence [in the integrity of His word] disappearing is not necessitated because the possibility of something rationally does not necessitate not having firm resolve of its non-existence.

"The running dispute regarding the rational impossibility and possibility of this applies to all deficiencies – is Allah's power over it absent or is it, i.e. the deficiency, contained in it, i.e. His Power? He will certainly not do it, i.e. the absolutely decisive condition is the deficiency will not be performed," to the end.

Similar [statements] to what we quoted from the *madhhab* of the Ash'aris were mentioned by Al-Qadi al-'Adud in *Sharh Mukhtasar al-Usul* and the commentators on it. Similar [statements] to it are found in *Sharh al-Mawaqif* and the marginalia to *Al-Mawaqif* by Al-Chalabi, and others. Similarly, 'Allamah al-Qushji in *Sharh al-Tajrid*, Al-Qunawi and others explicated this. We avoided quoting their texts fearing prolixity and tedium. Allah has charge of right guidance and right direction.

Question Twenty Six

What is your opinion on al-Qadiyani who claims messiahship and prophethood, because people accuse you of loving him and praising him, so it is hoped from your good characters that you clarify for us these matters in an adequate explanation so the truthfulness of the speakers and their dishonesty becomes clear, and the doubt that has arisen in our hearts from the confusions of the people does not remain.

Answer

The sum of our opinion and the opinion of our mashayikh on al-Qadiyani who claims messiahship and prophethood, is that in his initial phase we would hold a good opinion of him, as is deserving of a Muslim to a Muslim, since his evil belief was not yet exposed, rather it reached us he was supporting Islam and falsified all religions besides it with proofs and evidences; and we would interpret some of his statements and construe it according to an acceptable understanding. And then when he claimed prophethood and messiahship and denied Allah – Almighty – elevating the Messiah to the sky, and his despicable belief and his heresy became clear to us, our mashayikh – Allah be pleased with them – issued fatwas on his disbelief. The fatwa of our shaykh and our master Rashid Ahmad al-Gangohi – Allah have mercy on him – on the disbelief of al-Qadiyani has been printed and publicised. Much of it is in the possession of people, and there is no ambiguity in it; but since the objective of the innovators of India is to incite the fools of India and their ignoramuses against us and to drive the people of the two Harams and their muftis and judges and their noblemen away from us because they know the Arabs are not proficient in Urdu rather the Urdu books and treatises have not reached them, they invented against us these lies. Allah is asked for help, and on Him is reliance, and security is from Him.

This which we mentioned in response, it is what we believe and we take as our religion before Allah Almighty, so if it is in your opinion true and right write your approval on it and adorn it with your seal, and if it is wrong and false, direct us to what is right according to you, for we – if Allah wills – will not trespass the truth. And if any doubt appears in your hearts about us, we will correspond with you on it until the truth becomes clear and no ambiguity remains therein.

Our final call is that all praise belongs to Allah Lord of the Worlds.

Allah bless our master Muhammad, the chief of the first and the last, and all his family, his companions, his wives and his descendents

The servant of the students of the Islamic sciences, the [one] with many sins, the lowly Khalil Ahmad – Allah give him accordance to prepare for tomorrow – said this with his mouth and signed it with his pen on Monday 18th of Shawwal, year 1325 Hijri.